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C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (PARAS 25, 26, 27, 29)

FOL REPEAT NATO 3689 ACTION SECSTATE JUNE 30, 1976

QUOTE

C O N F I D E N T I A L USNATO 3689

PLEASE PASS NEA/RA - STEPHEN E. PALMER, JR.

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: NATO, XF, XI

SUBJ: REPORT BY NATO EXPERT WORKING GROUP

ON THE MIDDLE EAST AND THE MAGHREB

1. FOLLOWING IS TEXT OF REPORT ON THE SITUATION
IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND THE MAGHREB WHICH WAS PRE-
PARED BY NATO EXPERT WORKING GROUP THAT MET HERE
MAY 31-JUNE 2, 1976. THE REPORT COVERS THE PERIOD
FROM OCTOBER 16, 1975 TO JUNE 2, 1976.

2. COMMENT: WE UNDERSTAND INFORMALLY THAT THIS REPORT MAY
BE ON NAC AGENDA FOR JULY 14 MEETING. SINCE EXPERTS REPORTS
COVERS DEFINED PERIOD OF TIME, WE HAVE FOUND THAT UPDATING
COMMENTS FOR USE AT TIME OF NAC DISCUSSION ARE NOT
ESPECIALLY USEFUL. ON THE OTHER HAND,
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DEPARTMENT COMMENTS OF MORE SUBSTANTIVE AND GENERAL
NATURE ARE MUCH APPRECIATE; WE WOULD HOPPE THAT
SUCH GUIDANCE WILL BE PROVIDED WHEN EXPERTS REPORT
IS SCHEDULED FOR CONSIDERATION BY NAC.

BEGIN TEXT:

I. THE ARAB/ISRAELI CONFLICT

1. THE STEP-BY-STEP APPROACH TO MIDDLE EAST NEGOTIATIONS WHICH PRODUCED THE SECOND DISENGAGEMENT AGREEMENT IN THE SINAI WAS NOT FOLLOWED BY SIMILARLY POSITIVE RESULTS ON THE GOLAN HEIGHTS. IT WOULD APPEAR THAT A MORE COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH IS NOW NEEDED. THE UNITED STATES REMAINS COMMITTED TOWARDS WORKING FOR A RETURN TO NEGOTIATIONS IN 1976. INCREASED CONGRESSIONAL SUPPORT FOR THIS POLICY SHOULD BE NOTED. THE ISRAELI GOVERNMENT HAS PUT FORWARD A PROPOSAL THAT THE UNITED STATES SOUND OUT THE INTERESTED ARAB COUNTRIES ON THE IDEA OF TERRITORIAL WITHDRAWAL IN EXCHANGE FOR AN AGREEMENT TO END THE STATE OF BELLIGERENCY. THE UNITED STATES HAS TAKEN UP THIS INITIATIVE IN THE ABSENCE OF ANY MORE PROMISING ALTERNATIVE, ALTHOUGH THE STATED ARAB REACTION HAS BEEN UNFAVOURABLE SO FAR.

2. IN THE MEANTIME THE OUTLOOK FOR AN EARLY RESUMPTION OF THE GENEVA CONFERENCE REMAINS DIM. WHILE THE PARTIES CONCERNED PUBLICLY FAVOUR A RETURN TO GENEVA, THE CONDITIONS ATTACHED BY SYRIA AND THE SOVIET UNION, PARTICULARLY WITH RESPECT TO PALESTINIAN PARTICIPATION, EFFECTIVELY PRELUDE SUCH A DEVELOPMENT. ISRAEL HAS AGREED ONLY TO REPRESENTATION BY THE ORIGINAL PARTICIPANTS. ON THIS POINT AS ON OTHERS IT IS DIFFICULT TO PERCEIVE HOW EARLY PROGRESS CAN BE MADE TOWARDS A RECONCILIATION BETWEEN ISRAELI AND PALESTINIAN OBJECTIVES.

3. THE ROLE OF THE UNITED NATIONS IN THE MIDDLE EAST REMAINS IMPORTANT, BOTH WITH RESPECT TO PEACE-KEEPING AND TO DIPLOMATIC ACTIVITY. THE LATEST UNDOF MANDATE RENEWAL WAS AGREED TO DISCREETLY BY SYRIA FOLLOWING THE FACE-SAVING VISIT TO DAMASCUS BY SECRETARY GENERAL WALDHEIM. ON THE DIPLOMATIC FRONT MR. WALDHEIM PURSUED HIS PERSONAL PEACE EFFORTS IN ISSUING ON 1ST APRIL A MEMORANDUM ADDRESSED TO THE PARTIES AND DESIGNED TO SUGGEST A MEANS, IN THE FORM OF A PRELIMINARY CONFERENCE, TOWARDS RETURNING TO COMPREHENSIVE NEGOTIATIONS.

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4. EGYPT'S ROLE TOWARDS THE CONFLICT HAS CONTINUED TO BE CHARACTERIZED BY MODERATION. WHILE PUBLICLY PROMOTING THE ARAB CAUSE AND THE RETURN TO GENEVA TALKS, THE EGYPTIAN GOVERNMENT IS CONTENT WITH THE RESULTS OF THE SECOND SINAI AGREEMENT. IT WILL NOT COUNTERMANCE A DISCUSSION OF THAT AGREEMENT WITH, OR ITS PUTTING INTO QUESTION BY, OTHER ARAB COUNTRIES. AT THE SAME TIME, EGYPT HAS TAKEN ADVANTAGE OF THE EVENTS IN LEBANON TO IMPROVE ITS RELATIONS WITH THE PLO AND WITH YASSER ARAFAT.

5. SYRIA'S APPROACH TO THE CONFLICT HAS TAKEN THE FORM OF WAGING A DIPLOMATIC CAMPAIGN AGAINST ISRAEL IN THE UNITED NATIONS. THIS CAMPAIGN HAS SUCCEEDED IN FURTHER ISOLATING

ISRAELI WITHIN THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY. SYRIAN ENERGIES HAVE BEEN ALMOST EXCLUSIVELY DEVOTED TO LEBANON OVER THE PAST SIX MONTHS. ALTHOUGH SYRIAN ATTEMPTS TO PACIFY LEBANON MAY BE SEEN BY ISRAEL AS A THREAT TO EXTEND THE MIDDLE EAST CONFLICT BY THE PROGRESSIVE TRANSFORMATION OF LEBANON INTO A PROPERLY ARAB STATE UNDER PREDOMINANTLY SYRIAN INFLUENCE AND CONSEQUENTLY, A FULL-FLEDGED AND ACTIVE PARTICIPANT IN THE ARAB POLITICAL CAMPAIGN AGAINST ISRAEL, ISRAEL HAS NEVERTHELESS REMAINED CALM.

6. ISRAEL'S REACTIONS TO ARAB DIPLOMATIC GAINS AT THE UNITED NATIONS HAVE INCLUDED, INTER ALIA, THE DECISION TO ESTABLISH NEW SETTLEMENTS IN THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES. THIS HAS OCCURRED WHILE PUBLIC OPINION IN ISRAEL, AS IN MANY WESTERN COUNTRIES, HAS DEVELOPED A MORE SOPHISTICATED AWARENESS OF THE COMPLEXITIES OF THE ARAB/ISRAELI DISPUTE AND, IN PARTICULAR, OF AT LEAST CERTAIN OF THE CONCERNS AND ASPIRATIONS OF THE PALESTINIANS. THE RIGIDITY OF THE GOVT CAN BE ASCRIBED TO DOMESTIC POLITICAL FACTORS WHICH HAVE TENDED TO WEAKEN THE AUTHORITY OF PRIME MINISTER RABIN. THESE FACTORS INCLUDE THE KEEN PUBLIC CONTROVERSY OVER THE POLICY OF ESTABLISHING NEW SETTLEMENTS IN THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES AND THE RESULTS OF THE APRIL MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS IN THE WEST BANK IN WHICH MOST OF THE WINNERS APPEAR TO BE PALESTINIAN NATIONALISTS, STRONGLY OPPOSED BOTH TO THE ISRAELI OCCUPATION AND TO JORDANIAN RULE. AMONG THE MANY OTHER PROBLEMS BESETTING MR. RABIN AND HIS GOVT IS ISRAEL'S DIFFICULT ECONOMIC SITUATION, WHICH HAS REQUIRED FURTHER UNPOPULAR BELT-TIGHTENING.

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7. IN EGYPT, THERE ARE NO SIGNIFICANT CHALLENGES TO PRESIDENT SADAT'S AUTHORITY AND NONE ARE EXPECTED DURING THE ELECTIONS IN OCTOBER OF THIS YEAR. VICE PRESIDENT MUBARAK'S RECENT SUCCESSFUL TRIP TO CHINA HAS STRENGTHENED HIS INTERNAL POLITICAL STATUS; IN THIS, HE APPEARS TO HAVE HAD PRESIDENT SADAT'S BLESSING. EGYPT'S ECONOMY REMAINS PRECARIOUS AND WEIGHED DOWN BY MASSIVE INDEBTEDNESS. THE DEBT PROBLEM MAY HOWEVER BE ALLEVIATED CONSIDERABLY IF EGYPT WERE TO SUSPEND PAYMENT OF ALL OR PART OF ITS DEBTS TO THE USSR. WHILE EGYPT HAS SUCCEEDED IN OBTAINING FROM SAUDI ARABIA AND THE GULF STATES FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR EGYPTIAN INVESTMENT PROJECTS THE CONTROL OVER THE UTILIZATION OF THOSE FUNDS HAS REMAINED VESTED IN THE DONOR COUNTRIES. IN THE PRESENT SITUATION, ALLIANCE COUNTRIES HAVE A CLEAR COLLECTIVE INTEREST IN PROVIDING EGYPT WITH ECONOMIC SUPPORT NEEDED TO REINFORCE AND ENCOURAGE PRESIDENT SADAT IN HIS STATEMAN-LIKE AND MODERATE APPROACH TO THE MIDDLE EAST PROBLEM.

II. THE LEBANON CRISIS

8. THE CURRENT SITUATION IN LEBANON IS CHARACTERIZED BY CONTINUED FIGHTING BETWEEN A LARGE NUMBER OF POLITICAL AND

RELIGIOUS FACTIONS. THE THREE PRINCIPAL PARTIES TO THE CONFLICT REMAIN, HOWEVER, THE MARONITE CHRISTIANS, THE LEFTISTS/RADICAL MUSLIMS AND THE PALESTINIANS.

9. THE MAJOR POLITICAL AIMS OF THE MARONITE CHRISTIANS HAVE BEEN TO PRESERVE THE LEBANON AS A CHRISTIAN-DOMINATED COUNTRY AND TO SUBJECT THE PALESTINIANS TO EFFECTIVE CONTROL BY MILITARY MEANS.

10. THE LEFTISTS/RADICAL MUSLIM GROUP ON THE OTHER HAND DESIRES A TRANSFORMATION OF LEBANESE SOCIETY WITH AN OVERTURN OF THE OLD SOCIAL ORDER BASED TO A GREAT EXTENT ON VESTED ECONOMIC INTERESTS. THIS GROUP ALSO IDENTIFIES MORE CLOSELY WITH ARAB NATIONALISM RATHER THAN LEBANESE NATIONALISM.

11. THE PALESTINIANS, WHO HAVE FORMED A SEPARATE COMMUNITY INSIDE LEBANON'S BORDERS, BUT HAVE REMAINED OUTSIDE THE BOUNDS OF LEBANESE LAW, FOLLOW A VARIETY OF IDEOLOGIES, CONFIDENTIAL

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BUT ARE UNITED IN THE BELIEF THAT ALL ARABS SHOULD GIVE FIRST PRIORITY TO THE PALESTINIAN CAUSE.

12. THE FIGHTING IN LEBANON OVER THE PAST YEAR HAS INCREASED THE STRENGTH OF THE LEFTIST/RADICAL MUSLIM FORCES AND THAT OF THE PALESTINIANS AT THE EXPENSE OF THE ONCE-DOMINANT MARONITE CHRISTIAN AND TRADITIONAL MUSLIM LEADERSHIP. ONLY THREE YEARS AGO THE MARONITES HAD HOPED TO USE THE LEBANESE ARMY TO ELIMINATE THE FEDAYEEN PRESENCE. TODAY, HOWEVER, THE LEBANESE ARMY HAS DISINTEGRATED INTO MUSLIM AND CHRISTIAN FACTIONS, AND IT IS THE MARONITES WHO ARE ON THE DEFENSIVE. THE FIGHTING HAS LARGELY DESTROYED THE FABRIC OF LEBANESE SOCIETY AND THE LEBANESE POLITICAL SYSTEM TO SUCH AN EXTENT THAT LEBANON TODAY CAN BE SAID TO BE WITHOUT ANY EFFECTIVE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT AND IN A STATE OF DE FACTO PARTITION. THE RECENT ELECTION OF A NEW PRESIDENT COULD MEAN THE RE-ESTABLISHMENT OF A CENTRAL GOVERNMENT AUTHORITY. HOWEVER, MUCH DEPENDS ON WHEN MR. SARKIS WILL TAKE OFFICE AND WHETHER HE WILL BE ABLE TO INTRODUCE SUFFICIENT SECURITY TO ALLOW THE POLITICAL PROCESSES OF ACCOMMODATION AMONG THE VARIOUS FACTIONS TO SET IN.

13. THE PALESTINIANS HAVE PLAYED A MAJOR ROLE IN THE LEBANESE CRISIS AND HAVE BEEN THE BACKBONE OF THE LEFTIST/RADICAL MUSLIM SIDE. SYRIAN ATTEMPTS TO INFLUENCE THE PLO, NOTABLY THE SYRIAN ATTEMPT TO UTILIZE THE SAIGRA AND THE PEOPLE'S LIBERATION ARMY (PLA) TO ENFORCE A "PAX SYRIANA" IN MARCH 1976, HAVE LED TO STRAINS BETWEEN YASSIR ARAFAT AND THE SYRIAN GOVT WHICH HAVE COME TO A HEAD FOLLOWING THE RECENT DIRECT SYRIAN MILITARY INTERVENTION OF 1ST JUNE, 1976. CONCURRENTLY, THERE HAS BEEN AN IMPROVEMENT IN RELATIONS BETWEEN THE PLO MODERATES, LED BY ARAFAT, AND EGYPT.

14. THE SYRIANS' MAIN CONCERN THROUGHOUT THE CRISIS HAS BEEN TO DAMP DOWN THE FIGHTING, PROMOTE A MODERATE POLITICAL SETTLEMENT AND TO SAFEGUARD LEBANON'S TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY AND UNITY. AT THE SAME TIME THE SYRIANS STILL WISH TO AVOID BEING DRAWN INTO LEBANON IN SUCH A WAY AS TO RISK A CONFRONTATION WITH ISRAEL IN SOUTH LEBANON THE SYRIANS ARE LIKELY TO BE FACED WITH A CONTINUING CRISIS WHICH WILL CONSUME MUCH OF THEIR TIME AND ENERGY FOR THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE AND WHICH WILL
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REDUCE THE AMOUNT OF ATTENTION THAT THEY CAN GIVE THE ARAB/ ISRAELI DISPUTE.

15. IN EXTERNAL RELATIONS THE OBJECTIVES OF THE SYRIANS IN LEBANON WILL BE HIGHLY IMPORTANT, BUT IT SEEMS LIKELY THAT THEY WILL CONTINUE TO BACK THE MORE MODERATE MUSLIM LEADERS WHO WOULD PROBABLY NOT WISH TO SEE LEBANON ASSUME AN ACTIVIST ROLE IN ARAB/ISRAELI ISSUES.

16. THE OUTLOOK IN LEBANON IS A LONG PERIOD OF POLITICAL INSTABILITY AND THE CONTINUATION OF A "DE FACTO" PARTITION OF THE COUNTRY. DESPITE THE CAUTIOUS ATTITUDE DISPLAYED BY THE ISRAELI GOVT THE DANGER REMAINS THAT THE LEBANESE CRISIS COULD TRIGGER A NEW MIDDLE EAST WAR.

17. THE DECLARATION MADE IN NEW-ORLEANS ON THE 21ST OF MAY BY THE FRENCH PRESIDENT HAS BEEN GREETED SOMEWHAT PRECIPITOUSLY IN THE ARAB CAPITALS WITH CLEARCUT RESERVATIONS. IT IS NOTICEABLE THAT THE IDEA OF A FRENCH PARTICIPATION IN THE CONTROL OF THE CEASE-FIRE WAS FIRST FORMULATED ON THE 16TH OF APRIL IN BEIRUT BY THE FRENCH EMISSARY, MR. GORSE, AND REFORMULATED OFFICIALLY THE 6TH OF MAY BY THE MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS BEFORE THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY. THE POSSIBLE DISPATCH OF FRENCH FORCES TO LEBANON WAS SUBJECT TO 3 PRE-REQUISITES:

- PRIOR IMPLEMENTATION OF A CEASE-FIRE;
- FORMAL REQUEST BY THE LEGAL AUTHORITIES OF LEBANON;
- AGREEMENT OF ALL CONCERNED PARTIES.

18. LOOKING TO THE FUTURE, THE FRENCH GOVT REMAINS READY TO PARTICIPATE IN ANY OPERATION AIMING AT BRIDGING THE GAP BETWEEN THE CONTENDING GROUPS.

III. THE MAGHREB

WESTERN SAHARA

19. SINCE 26TH FEB, MOROCCO AND MAURITANIA HAVE BEEN IN CONTROL OF WESTERN SAHARA. THEIR TROOPS ARE, NEVERTHELESS, BEING HARASSED IN THE MORE REMOTE PARTS OF THE SAHARA BY

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GUERRILLAS OF THE ALGERIAN-BACKED FRENTE PLISARIO INDEPENDENCE MOVEMENT, WHICH PROCLAIMED THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A SHARAN ARAB DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC ON 27TH FEB.

20. THE EXTENSION OF MOROCCAN AND MAURITANIAN CONTROL OVER THE WESTERN SAHARA HAS LED TO AN ACUTE CRISIS BETWEEN THESE COUNTRIES AND ALGERIA; DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WERE FORMALLY BROKEN OFF ON 7TH MARCH. THE ALGERIANS DO NOT CLAIM THE WESTERN SAHARA THEMSELVES, BUT SUPPORT THE FRENTE PLISARIO WHICH IS THOUGHT TO HAVE AN EFFECTIVE STRENGTH OF ABOUT 3,000. APART FROM TWO INCIDENTS ON 27TH JAN ANAD 15 FEB, THE ALGERIAN ARMED FORCES HAVE NOT MADE ANY ATTEMPT TO INVIAD THE TERRITORY. THE ALGERIANS HAVE, NEVERTHEELESS, CONDUCTED A DETERMINED DIPLOMATIC CAMPAIGN AGAINST MOROCCO AND MAURITANIA. ALTHOUGH THEY HHAVE NOT RECEIVED THE SUPPORT THEY EXPECTED, PARTICULARLY FROM THE NON-ALIGNED AND THE COMMUNIST COUNTRIES, IT IS CLEAR THAT THEY INTEND TO RAISE THE QUESTION OF THE WESTERN SAHARA IN THE UN AND OTHER INT'L FORA.

21. ON 14TH APRIL, MOROCCO AND MAURITANIA AGREED ON A NEW FRONTIER IN WESTERN SAHARA AND ALSO ON A PROGRAMME OF JOINT EXPLOITATION OF ITS NATURAL RESOURCES.

22. ALGERIA IS COMMITTED TO SUPPORT FOR THE FRENTE PLISARIO, BUT IT CLEARLY WISHES TO AVOID OPEN WAR WITH MOROCCO. POLISARIO ACTIVITY IS, THEREFORE, RESTRICTED TO HIT AND RUN TACTICS ACROSS THE ALGERIAN/SAHARAN BORDER. IN MILITARY TERMS, POLISARIO IS INEFFECTIVE WITHOUT ADEQUATE ALGERIAN SUPPORT, AND EVEN WITH SUCH SUPPORT ITS MILITARY CAPABILITY WILL REMAIN LIMITED. A CONTINUATION OF SPORADIC BUT LIMIEDTED GUIERRILA OPRATION IS LIKELY.

23. ALGERIA'S LONGER-TERM AIM IN SUPPORTING POLISARIO MAY BE TO SUBERT THE MAURITANIAN REGIME AND POSSIBLY TO UNDERMINE THE STABILITY OF THE PRESENT MOROCCAN LEADERSHIP. IT ALSO PROBABLY SEES ADVANTAGE IN USING IT SUPPORT FOR POLISARIO AS A MEANS OF EXERTING PRESSURE ON ITS NEIGHBOURS AND, IN PARTICULAR, TO OBTAIN MOROCCAN RATIFICATION OF THE 1973 BILATERAL FRONITER AGREEMTN. THE PROBLEM OF WESTERN SAHARA IS, THEREFORE, LIKELY TO CONTINUE TO SOUR RELATIONS BETWEEN MOROCCO AND LAGERIA FOR THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE.

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DOMESTIC SITUATION IN THE MAGHREB STATES

24. IN ALGERIA, THEE IS EVIDENCE OF DISSATISFACTION WITH BOUMEDIENE'S STYLE OF GOVT AND SAHARAN POLICIES AS WELL AS ACUTE ECONOMIC DIFFICULTIES. IN MARCH. FOUR RESPECTED

FIGURES FROM THE OLDER GENERATION CIRCULATED A DOCUMENT CRITICIZING BOTH THE AUTOCRATIC CHARACTER OF THE REGIME AND ITS SAHARAN POLICY. IN ADDITION, THE AGRARIAN REVOLUTION HAS ENCOUNTERED A VARIETY OF DIFFICULTIES, AND THE REGIME IS TROUBLED BY LINGERING ECONOMIC PROBLEMS, INCLUDING HIGH UNEMPLOYMENT AND SHORTAGES OF BASIC COMMODITIES. AN UNANTICIPATED DECLINE IN OIL AND NATURAL GAS EXPORTS, COUPLED WITH SLUMPING PRICES, HAVE CUT INTO ALGERIAN REVENUES. UNLESS THESE TRENDS ARE REVERSED OR ALGERIA RAISES MUCH MORE CAPITAL ON THE INT'L MARKET, THE EFFECTS MAY SOON BE FELT ON THE COUNTRY'S DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME. TO SOLIDIFY ALGERIA'S "SOCIALIST OPTION", THE GOVERNMENT ISSUED IN APRIL A LENGTHY DRAFT OF THE NATIONAL CHARTER, WHICH IS TO SERVE AS THE PRELUDE TO A CONSTITUTION AND NATIONAL ELECTIONS LATER THIS YEAR. IT IS UNLIKELY THAT THIS WILL LEAD TO ANY GENUINE DEMOCRATIZATION OF THE REGIME. THERE IS NO EVIDENCE THAT BOUMEDIENE REGIME IS IN DANGER.

25. THE DISPUTE OVER THE WESTERN SAHARA HAS DOMINATED MOROCCAN POLITICS DURING THE LAST YEAR. KING HASSAN WAS UNDER CONSIDERABLE PRESSURE FROM THE MAIN OPPOSITION PARTIES TO FULFILL HIS PROMISE TO GAIN CONTROL OF THE WESTERN SAHARA BY THE END OF 1975. THE EXTENSION OF MOROCCAN CONTROL OVER THE NORTHERN PART OF THE WESTERN SAHARA HAS SILENCED THE GOVT'S CRITICS, AND IT IS NOW LIKELY THAT THE OPPOSITION PARTIES WILL TAKE PART WITHOUT DEMUR IN THE MUNICIPAL AND GENERAL ELECTIONS DUE TO BE HELD IN THE SUMMER. NEVERTHELESS, THERE ARE UNDERLYING SOCIAL TENSIONS, AND THE FUTURE ATTITUDES OF THE OFFICER CLASS IN THE ARMED FORCES WILL BE A DETERMINING FACTOR FOR STABILITY.

26. THE MOROCCAN BALANCE OF TRADE SUFFERED IN 1975 FROM THE WEAKENING OF THE PHOSPHATE MARKET AND POOR HARVESTS. DESPITE THIS SETBACK, ECONOMIC ACTIVITY HAS BEEN HIGH: INFLATION HAS BEEN KEPT BELOW 10 PERCENT, AND THE MOROCCANS HAVE OBTAINED SIZEABLE LOANS FROM EUROPEAN AND ARAB SOURCES. CONFIDENTIAL

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PROVIDED THAT THE DEMANDS FOR PHOSPHATES PICKS UP, THE ECONOMIC OUTLOOK WILL REMAIN GOOD, AND THE AVERAGE GROWTH RATE OF THE GDP IS EXPECTED TO BE ABOUT 6.5 PERCENT OVER THE PERIOD OF THE 1973-77 DEVELOPMENT PLAN.

27. DESPITE ILL-HEALTH, PRESIDENT BOURGUIBA OF TUNISIA REMAINS IN A STRONG POSITION, ALTHOUGH HE HAS TO RELY INCREASINGLY ON HIS NOMINATED SUCCESSOR, PRIME MINISTER NOUIRA, FOR THE DAY TO DAY ADMINISTRATION OF THE COUNTRY. THE LEADING OPPONENT OF THE REGIME IS THE EXILED MINISTER AHMED BEN SALAH, WHO TRIED IN 1975 TO FORM AN ALLIANCE BETWEEN HIS MOUVEMENT DE L'UNITE POPULAIRE AND OTHER OPPOSITION GROUPS, INCLUDING THE MARXISTS-LENINISTS, BA'ATHISTS AND THE COMMUNIST PARTY. THERE HAVE BEEN CONTINUING ARRESTS AND TRIALS OF THE GOVERNMENT'S OPPONENTS. ALTHOUGH PRESIDENT BOURGUIBA HAS TAKEN THESE THREATS

SERIOUSLY AND HAS GONE OUT OF HIS WAY TO CRITICIZE BEN SALAH IN A NUMBER OF SPEECHES, THE REGIME IS STABLE. DESPITE A POOR BALANCE OF TRADE IN 1975, BECAUSE THE ECONOMY IS SOUNDLY BASED: THE RATE OF GROWTH OF THE GDP IS AROUND 9PERCENT, AND TUNISIA CONTINUES TO ATTRACT INVESTMENT FROM ABROAD.

28. TUNISIA IS ONE OF THE MORE MODERATE ARAB COUNTRIES. ITS RELATIONS WITH MOROCCO ARE GOOD AND WITH ALGERIA COOL. ITS SYMPATHY FOR MOROCCAN POLICIES ON WESTERN SAHARA HAS AFFECTED BOTH. RELATIONS WITH LIBYA ARE POOR. THE GOVT'S FOREIGN POLICY REMAINS PRO-WESTERN: TUNISIA'S RELATIONS WITH THE EEC HAVE BEEN STRENGTHENED AS THE RESULT OF THE CONCLUSION OF THE EEC/MAGHREB NEGOTIATIONS.

29. EVENTS IN LIBYA SINCE THE ATTEMPTED COUP LAST SUMMER HAVE TENDED TO EXPOSE GADAFY IN AN INCREASINGLY ISOLATED, AUTOCRATIC POSITION; THE PARTY GENERAL CONGRESS IN JANUARY 1976 AMOUNTED TO A BLATANT REASSERTION OF AUTHORITY BY GADAFY WITH LITTLE PRETENCE OF CONSENSUS GOVERNMENT THROUGH THE RUMP REVOLUTIONARY COMMAND COUNCIL. ALTHOUGH THERE ARE CONTINUED RUMOURS OF CONSPIRACIES AGAINST GADAFY AND THERE HAS BEEN OPEN REVOLT BY STUDENTS IN BENGHAZI AND TRIPOLI, GADAFY'S GRIP ON INTERNAL SECURITY APPEARS TO BE FIRM. BUT GADAFY'S ENERGIES ARE INCREASINGLY DIRECTED TOWARDS PRESERVING HIS OWN POSITION, AND THERE IS STAGNATION AT ALL LEVELS OF ADMINISTRATION AND IN THE ECONOMY.
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30. LIBYA'S RELATIONS WITH ITS NEIGHBOURS, EGYPT AND TUNISIA, DETERIORATED AGAIN IN THE BEGINNING OF 1976. ARMED LIBYAN AGENTS WERE ARRESTED IN BOTH EGYPT AND TUNISIA, AND IT SEEMS LIKELY THAT THEIR OBJECTIVES WERE, ON THE ONE HAND, TO ABDUCT BY FORCE THE DEFECTING RCC MEMBER, MUHAISHI, FROM CAIRO AND, ON THE OTHER, ACCORDING TO THE TUNISIANS, TO ASSASSINATE THEIR PRIME MINISTER. GADAFY REACTED TO THE CONSIDERABLE PUBLICITY GIVEN TO THESE INCIDENTS BY EXPELLING SEVERAL THOUSAND EGYPTIAN AND TUNISIAN WORKERS FROM LIBYA, ALTHOUGH THIS WAS ONLY A FRACTION OF THE TOTAL. TENSION HAD SUBSIDED BY MAY 1976, ALTHOUGH BOTH EGYPT AND TUNISIA ARE REPORTED TO BE CONCERNED ABOUT GADAFY'S SUPPORT FOR SUBVERSIVE ACTIVITIES IN THEIR COUNTRIES. GADAFY HAS BEEN QUICK TO EXPLOIT ALGERIA'S ISOLATION OVER THE WESTERN SAHARA ISSUE TO EXPLORE CLOSER UNITY WITH THIS COUNTRY. POLITICAL UNITY BETWEEN ALGERIA AND LIBYA IS LIKELY TO BE AN ELUSIVE GOAL, WITH LITTLE GENUINE COMMITMENT ON EITHER SIDE.

IV. OTHER COUNTRIES OF THE REGION

31. DURING THE PERIOD UNDER REVIEW THERE HAVE BEEN NO BASIC CHANGES IN THE COUNTRIES OF THE ARABIAN PENINSULA. KING KHALID AND CROWN PRINCE FAHD OF SAUDI ARABIA APPEAR TO BE WORKING WELL TOGETHER AND THE TRADITIONAL PUBLIC SOLIDARITY

OF THE ROYAL FAMILY HAS BEEN REAFFIRMED. THE INTRODUCTION OF NEW TECHNOCRATS INTO IMPORTANT POSITIONS HAS IMPROVED THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE ADMINISTRATION. NEVERTHELESS THERE ARE STILL SERIOUS BOTTLENECKS IN THE SAUDI ECONOMY AND SEVERE INFLATION.

32. SAUDI ARABIA'S MASSIVE FINANCIAL AID TO OTHER ARAB STATES HAS HELPED IT TO CONTINUE TO EXERCISE AN INFLUENTIAL ROLE THROUGHOUT THE ARAB WORLD AND IN PARTICULAR IN THE PENINSULA. ITS ATTEMPTS TO MEDIATE BETWEEN SYRIA AND EGYPT AND BETWEEN SYRIA AND IRAQ, KING KHALID'S VISIT TO THE GULF STATES AND PRINCE SULTAN'S VISIT TO THE YEMEN ARAB REPUBLIC ILLUSTRATE THIS.

33. IN DECEMBER 1975 THE SULTAN OF OMAN DECLARED VICTORY IN THE DHOFAR WAR.. ITALIAN TROOPS HAVE NOT YET BEEN WITHDRAWN, CONFIDENTIAL

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HOWEVER. ISOLATED GUERRILLA ACTIVITY WITHIN DHOFAR AND SPORADIC CROSSBORDER BOMBARDMENT FROM THE PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF YEMEN (PDY) CONTINUE AND THERE IS NO SIGN YET OF REDUCED PDY SUPPORT FOR THE POPULAR FRONT FOR THE LIBERATION OF AMON (PFLO). ON 5TH MAY, 1976 THE ESTABLISHMENT OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS BETWEEN PDY AND SAUDI ARABIA WAS ANNOUNCED. DESPITE SAUDI HOPES TO PERSUADE PDY TO MODERATE ITS EXTREME POLICIES BY THIS AND BY THE OFFER OF ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE, THERE IS NO SIGN YET OF A CHANGE IN THE FUNDAMENTAL POLICIES OF PDY.

34. IN IRAQ, THE BA'ATH GOVT REMAINS FIRMLY IN POWER THROUGH THE REVOLUTIONARY COMMAND COUNCIL, WHOSE EFFECTIVE LEADER IS SADAM HUSSEIN. THE EASING OF TENSION BOTH WITHIN THE COUNTRY AFTER THE END OF THE KURDISH REBELLION, AND WITH ITS NEIGHBOUR IRAN FOLLOWING THE ALGIERS AGREEMENT IN 1975, COUPLED WITH IRAQ'S INCREASING PROSPERITY AS A RESULT OF THE RISE IN OIL PRICES, HAS LED THE IRAQIS TO TURN TO THE WEST FOR ADDITIONAL ASSISTANCE WITH THEIR DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME BEYOND THAT ALREADY PROVIDED BY THE SOVIET UNION. IRAQ'S POLITICAL RELATIONS WITH THE ARAB COUNTRIES HAVE IMPROVED IN THE LAST YEAR THOUGH THERE ARE DIFFERENCES WITH ARAB OIL PRODUCERS OVER OIL PRICING POLICY. HOWEVER, RELATIONS WITH SYRIA REMAIN POOR FOR BOTH POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC REASONS.

35. IN IRAN, IT REMAINS TO BE SEEN WHETHER THE RESURGENCE PARTY WILL OVERCOME THE ABSENCE OF ANY REAL SENSE OF PARTICIPATION IN THE IRANIAN POLITICAL STRUCTURE. ON THE ECONOMIC FRONT THE MOOD IS NOW ONE OF SOBER REAPPRAISAL AND COST-CONSCIOUSNESS REFLECTED IN GOVERNMENT-INSPIRED CAMPAIGNS AGAINST PROTECTORING AND CORRUPTION AND THE BUDGET FOR THE COMING YEAR. BOTTLENECKS AND SHORTAGES OF LABOUR CONTINUE TO AFFECT FOR EXAMPLE THE PORTS AND THE SUPPLY AND CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRIES IN IRAN AS IN MOST OTHER MIDDLE EAST COUNTRIES. IRAN REMAINS COMMITTED TO INCREASING ITS MILITARY CAPABILITY,

BUT CHANGED ECONOMIC CIRCUMSTANCES AND THE NEED TO ABSORB
SOPHISTICATED EQUIPMENT ALREADY BOUGHT MAY COMBINE TO USHER IN
A PERIOD OF CONSOLIDATION.

36. IRAN'S MOVES TO ORGANIZE FORMAL REGIONAL SECURITY
ARRANGEMENTS IN THE GULF HAVE BEEN UNSUCCESSFUL SO FAR, MAINLY
DUE TO IRAQI INSISTENCE THAT ANY SUCH ARRANGEMENTS SHOULD BE
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CONFINED TO FREEDOM OF NAVIGATION IN THE GULF. THAT THE
IRANIAN PROPOSALS WERE BASED ON GENERAL ACCEPTANCE OF THEIR
MOTIVES IN SAUDI ARABIA AND THE OTHER GULF STATES, DESPITE
IRAN'S WILLINGNESS TO GIVE SAUDI ARABIA A FREE HAND IN THE
ARABIAN PENINSULA.

V. RELATIONS WITH THE OUTSIDE WORLD

37. RELATIONS BETWEEN ARAB STATES AND ISRAEL ON THE ONE
HAND AND THE OUTSIDE WORLD ON THE OTHER HAVE CONTINUED, TO A
GREAT EXTENT AT LEAST, TO DEPEND ON THE ARAB/ISRAELI CONFLICT.
THE ARABS HAVE BEEN QUITE SUCCESSFUL IN USING THE UN, THE
SPECIALIZED AGENCIES AND INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES AS A FORUM
AGAINST ISRAEL BY BRINGING THEIR WEIGHT TO BEAR. THE SOVIET
UNION AND ITS ALLIES HAVE CONTINUED TO LEND THEIR ALMOST
UNCONDITIONAL VERBAL SUPPORT TO EVEN THE MOST RADICAL MOVES
SUCH AS THE RESOLUTION ON ZIONISM AS A FORM OF RACISM. HOWEVER,
THE INDICATIONS THAT THERE IS A LIMIT TO THE ARAB INFLUENCE ON
THIRD WORLD COUNTRIES HAVE BECOME MORE EVIDENT OVER THE PAST
SIX MONTHS. THIS WAS LARGELY DUE TO AFRICAN DISENCHANTMENT
AT THE LEVEL OF FINANCIAL AID GIVEN BY THE ARAB OIL PRODUCING
COUNTRIES. AS A RESULT OF THIS, ISRAEL IS ABLE, WITHIN LIMITS,
TO IMPROVE ITS BILATERAL RELATIONS, THOUGH ONLY INFORMALLY,
WITH SOME AFRICAN COUNTRIES. BUT THE VISIT TO ISRAEL RECENTLY
OF MR. VORSTER, THE SOUTH AFRICAN PREMIER, SEEMS TO HAVE PUT
SOME NEW STRAIN ON ISRAEL'S RELATIONSHIP WITH AFRICAN COUNTRIES.

38. RELATIONS BETWEEN THE ARAB COUNTRIES AND THE WESTERN
WORLD HAVE CONTINUED TO IMPROVE FURTHER BOTH POLITICALLY AND
ECONOMICALLY.

39. CONTRIBUTORY FACTORS HAVE BEEN THE US EFFORTS TOWARDS
A SETTLEMENT OF THE ARAB/ISRAELI CONFLICT AND THE EGYPTIAN
CO-OPERATION WITH THE WESTERN WORLD WHICH THE SAUDIS HAVE
BACKED, ALTHOUGH NOT WITHOUT RESERVATIONS.

40. THE EURO-ARAB DIALOGUE, WHICH STARTED AT THE END OF
1973 AS THE EXPRESSION OF A POLITICAL WILL TO PURSUE A LONG-
TERM CO-OPERATION IN VARIOUS FIELDS BETWEEN THE EUROPEAN
COMMUNITY AND THE ARAB WORLD, REACHED A NEW AND MEANINGFUL
STAGE WITH THE FIRST SESSION OF ITS GENERAL COMMITTEE,
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HELD IN LUXEMBOURG FROM 18TH-20 TH MAY, 1976.

41. THIS MEETING AFFORDED AN OPPORTUNITY FOR BOTH SIDES TO CONSIDER THE GENERAL POLICY AND STATE OF THE DIALOGUE. BOTH PARTIES DISCUSSED ALL ASPECTS OF THE DIALOGUE AND EXCHANGED STATEMENTSON POLITICAL ISSUES.

42. THE RECOMMENDATONS PASSED IN THE THREE PREVIOUS MEETINGS OF EXPERTS, INCLUDING THE SETTING UP OF WORKING AND SPECIALIZED GROUPS, WERE ADOPTED AND THE I PORTANCE OF THE RELATIVE PROGRESS ACHIEVED UNTIL NOW IN THE VARIOUS FIELDS OF CO-OPERATION WAS APPRECIATED. THE GENERAL COMMITTEE ALSO ESTALISHED THE ORGANIZATION AND PROCEDURAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE DIALOGUE AND RECOMMENDED THAT ALL ITS BODIES PRESS ON WITH THEIR WORK, ACCORDING TO AN AGREED TIMETABLE.

43. THE NEXT MEETING OF THE GENERAL COMMITTEE IS DUE TO TAKE PLACE DURING THE SECOND HALF OF 1976 IN AN ARAB CAPITAL. FURTHERMORE, BOTH PARTIES TO THE DIALOGUE EXPRESSED THEIR EXPECTATION THAT A MEETING ON THE LEVEL OF FOREIGN MINISTERS BE HELD AT AN APPROPRIATE DATE.

44. ECONOMIC RELATIONS BETWEEN MOST OF THE IMPORTANT ARAB COUNTRIES AND THE WEST ONTINUE TO BE DOMINATED BY PETROLEUM OR DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE ISSUES. THE POLITICAL INFLUENCE OF THE ARAB OIL PRODUCERS ON THE POLICIES OF THE NON-ALIGNED HAS FURTHER DECLINED. SEVERAL PRODUCERS VIGOROUSLY PURSUE ENDEAVOURS TO REORDER INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC RELATIONS TO THE ADVANAGE OF THE NON-INDUSTRILIZED COUNTRIES. HOWEVER, THE SPECIAL ROLE OF ALGERIA ON THE INTERNATIONAL STAGE, WHILE STILL VIGOROUS, HAS WANED. ISSUES PERTAINING TO THE ARAB BOYCOTT OF ISRAEL MAY PUT STRAINS ON WESTERN-ARAB COMMERCE.

45. WHILE MOST WESTERN STATES HAVE ADJUSTED TO THE OIL PRICE INCREASES, THE 10PERCENT RISE OF LAST SEPTEMBER AGGRAVATED THE ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL PROBLEMS OF MANY DEVELOPING COUNTRIES. FEARS PERSIST AMONG CONSUMING COUNTRIES REGARDING SECURITY OF SUPPLY AND COST. OPEC'S RECNT DECSION IN BALI TO DESIST FROM A FURTHER PRICE INCREASE WAS ATTRIBUTABLE IN PART TO A BUILD-UP OF STOCKS BY MANY CONSUMERS, IN PART TO THE ECONOMIC STATESMANSHIP OF SAUDI ARABIA, AND IN PART TO REDUCED DEMAND, CONFIDENTIAL

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ESPECIALLY FOR HEAVY CRUDE OIL. SAUDI ARABIA'S FLEXIBILITY AS THE KEY PRODUCER - IT IS ABLE TO VARY PRODUCTION APPRECIABLY WITHOUT SACRIFICE TO ITS DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS - WILL LONG GIVE THE KINGDOM A KEY ROLE IN THE CARTEL.

46. ACTUAL AND I TENTIAL ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE FROM THE ARAB OIL PRODUCING STATES AND IRAN IS A MAJOR ASPECT OF THEIR

INFLUENCE WITH THE DEVELOPING COUNTRIES. SAUDI ARABIA, IRAN, KUWAIT AND THE UNITED ARAB EMIRATES ARE STILL THE MAJOR AID DONORS, THOUGH IRAN'S CASH FLOW SITUATION HAS OCCASIONED A REASSESSMENT BY TEHRAN OF ITS FOREIGN AID. THE KUWAIT, SAUDI ARABIA AND ABU DHABI DEVELOPMENT FUNDS ARE SERVING TO RATIONALIZE THE PROVISION OF CAPITAL.

47. MOST ARAB AID HAS GONE TO FELLOW-ARAB OR CO-RELIGIONISTS, MUCH OF IT TO EGYPT, JORDAN AND SYRIAN. ARAB AND IRANIAN AID TO THE CONFRONTATION STATES (AND WESTERN AID TO EGYPT) SIGNIFICANTLY UNDERPINS THE RECIPIENT REGIMES' CAPABILITIES TO ESPOUSE RELATIVELY MODERATE APPROACHES TO ARAB/ISRAEL ISSUES. THE "\$3.3 BILLION" ARAB DEVELOPMENT FUND FOR COMMERCIAL INVESTMENTS IN EGYPT HAS YET TO FIND CONCRETE EXPRESSION; THUS FAR PRESIDENT SADAT SEEMS TO HAVE RECEIVED SOME \$1 BILLION IN PROMISES ONLY.

48. UNDERDEVELOPED NON-ISLAMIC COUNTRIES HAVE CAUSE FOR COMPLAINT; DISENCHANTMENT IS MOUNTING IN BLACK AFRICA AND ELSEWHERE. FOR EXAMPLE. WHILE INDIA RECEIVED IN 1975 AN ESTIMATED \$250 MILLION BY WAY OF DEFERRRED PAYMENT TERMS ON OIL FROM IRAQ AND IRAN THIS NOWHERE NEAR COMPENSATED IT FOR INCREASED OIL COSTS. AT THE DAKAR CONFERENCE OF THE ARAB LEAGUE AND THE OAU FOREIGN MINISTERS' MEETING IN APRIL SOME OF THESE DIFFERENCES EMERGED.

49. HOWEVER IN THE UN, THE NON-ALIGNED WORLD CONFERENCE AND IN OTHER FORA, THERE ARE NO SIGNS OF SERIOUS STRAIN BETWEEN THE OPEC AND NON-OIL DEVELOPING COUNTRIES. THE TWO GROUPS ARE COLLABORATING CLOSELY TOGETHER IN THE CONFERENCE ON INT'L ECONOMIC CO-OPERATION (CIEC). OPEC COUNTRIES CO-CHAIR THREE OF THE FOUR COMMISSIONS (ENERGY - SAUDI ARABIA, DEVELOPMENT-ALGERIA, FINANCE-IRAN). IRAQ IS A CONFERENCE PARTICIPANT. THE FIRST ROUND OF MEETINGS OF THE COMMISSIONS, IN FEBRUARY, CONFIDENTIAL

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WAS MARKED BY A READINESS ON ALL SIDES TO AVOID CONFRONTATION. HOWEVER, THE OIL PRODUCERS ARGUED ON FAMILIAR LINES THAT THE INCREASE IN OIL PRICES SIMPLY REDRESSED A LONG-STANDING INEQUITY. IN THE ENERGY COMMISSION THEY RESISTED LINKAGE OF THE GLOBAL ENERGY SITUATION WITH WIDER CONSIDERATION OF THE WORLD ECONOMY. IN THE FINANCE COMMISSION THE SURPLUS COUNTRIES - PRINCIPALLY SAUDI ARABIA - INSISTED ON DISCUSSING THE PURCHASING POWER OF THEIR FINANCIAL ASSETS(1).

50. WESTERN GOVTS WHICH ARE CONCERNED ABOUT ASPECTS OF ARAB BOYCOTT OF ISRAEL REGULATION - ESPECIALLY SECONDARY BOYCOTTS - FACE POTENTIAL DIFFICULTIES IN THEIR TRADE WITH SOME ARAB COUNTRIES. INDICATION OF SOME FLEXIBILITY IN THE ARABS' APPLICATION OF THE BOYCOTT PROBABLY REFLECT ARAB NEED FOR PARTICULAR MILITARY AND CIVILIAN PRODUCTS NOT WIDELY AVAILABLE. HOWEVER, WESTERN GOVERNMENTAL ACTIONS WHICH WOULD BE

PERCEIVED BY THE ARABS AS CONFRONTATIONAL COULD ARREST THIS
TREND TOWARDS PRAGMATISM.

(1) AT THE TIME THIS REPORT WAS PREPARED, THE PARTICIPANTS
LACKED DEFINITIVE INFORMATION ON THE OUTCOME OF THE
NAIROBI UNCTAD CONFERENCE

51. WHILST THE TENDENCY TOWARDS BETTER RELATIONS BETWEEN
ARAB COUNTRIES AND THE WESTERN WORLD HAS CONTINUED, THE DEVE-
LOPMENT OF ARAB-SOVIET RELATIONS HAS NOT REACHED THE LEVEL OF
SOVIET EXPECTATIONS. IN EGYPT THE ABROGATION OF THE SOVIET-
EGYPTIAN TREATY OF FREIDNSHIP MARKED AN ALL-TIME LOW. THIS
EGYPTIAN MOVE FOLLOWED MONTHS OF MOUNTING SOVIET PRESSURE ON
SADAT SUCH AS THE REFUSAL TO RESCHEDULE EGYPT'S ENORMOUS DEBTS
AND TO CONTINUE SUPPLIES OF NEW MILITARY EQUIPMENT, SAPRE
PARTS AND EVEN MAINTENANCE WORK.

52. THOUGH SYRIA MAINTAINS CLOSE TIES WITH THE SOVET
UNION, PRESIDENT ASSAD, DESPITE HEAVY DEPENDENCE ON SOVIET
SUPPLIES, HS SUCCEEDED INCONTAINING SOVIET INFLUENCE AND IN
KEEPING HIS OPTIONS OPEN. THE SAME APPLIES TO IRAQ. INTER-
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NATIONAL REACTION TO THE SOVIET MIDDLE EAST INITIATIVE OF
APRIL 1976 MAY HAVE REFLECTED IN PART THE DECREASE OF SOVIET
INFLUENCE IN THE REGION DESPITE THE I MPROVEMENT OF ITS POSITION
IN LIBYA AND POSSIBLE SUPPLY OF SOVIET MILITARY EQUIPMENT
TO JORDAN.

53. CHINA'S INFLUENCE IN THE REGION CONTINUES TO BE
MARGINAL. END TEXT. STREATOR

UNQUOTE. KISSINGER

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